4 June 1963 L-11799

Mr. James E. King, Jr.
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Dear Jim:

I find to my horror -- on cleaning up my desk prior to spending several weeks in Washington -- that I have not yet sent you the comments or the draft which you requested. I had put them aside, earlier, with the intention of postponing a reply until I could write some comprehensive notes on the two papers, which I had found historically significant but extremely stimulating in the current context. The evident, embarrassing result was to forget, as time passed, that I had not yet done this. I apologize; and I hope my neglect will not totally obscure my real admiration for these pieces.

Since, in a few days, I shall be arriving in Washington to spend the rest of June, let me return the draft to you immediately and count upon having a long discussion with you while I am there, if you can spare the time.

I think there is no doubt that the paper on "Nuclear Counter-Deterrence" advances hypotheses which, if they had been taken seriously by more people at the time the paper was written, might have drawn near-overwhelming support from evidence becoming available in the succeeding years. If so, that might have spared us some of the shock and disorganization which followed the discoveries exploding the missile gap. Yet I am scarcely conscious of a single other example of analysis exploring these hypotheses (except, as you point out, for Garthoff). In the studies with which I am familiar for the years 1958-1961, such notions simply were not examined at all. Were they, for intellectual reasons not evident to us now, "unthinkable," literally unimaginable, requiring a conceptual breakthrough of some sort before they could be entertained? The existence of your paper during that period raises disturbing questions. If these ideas were accessible

to you, why not to others? (No offense.) And, to what extent did you make them accessible to others? To suppose that your colleagues in this field, including those at RAND, were offered but had totally rejected these conjectures, would expose them to much more serious criticism than to suppose -- as I had previously assumed -- that such notions had simply never occurred to them. At any rate, my congratulations on the bets you were placing in those days.

Rather than pursue these thoughts here, let me plan to have a long session with you in Washington within the next couple of weeks. I'll call when I arrive to make sure when you might be available.

Yours,

Daniel Ellsberg
Economics Department

DE/ss
Enclosure
Working Draft, "Study of United States Foreign Policy," prepared by Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research

bcc: Gampf/Mengel
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